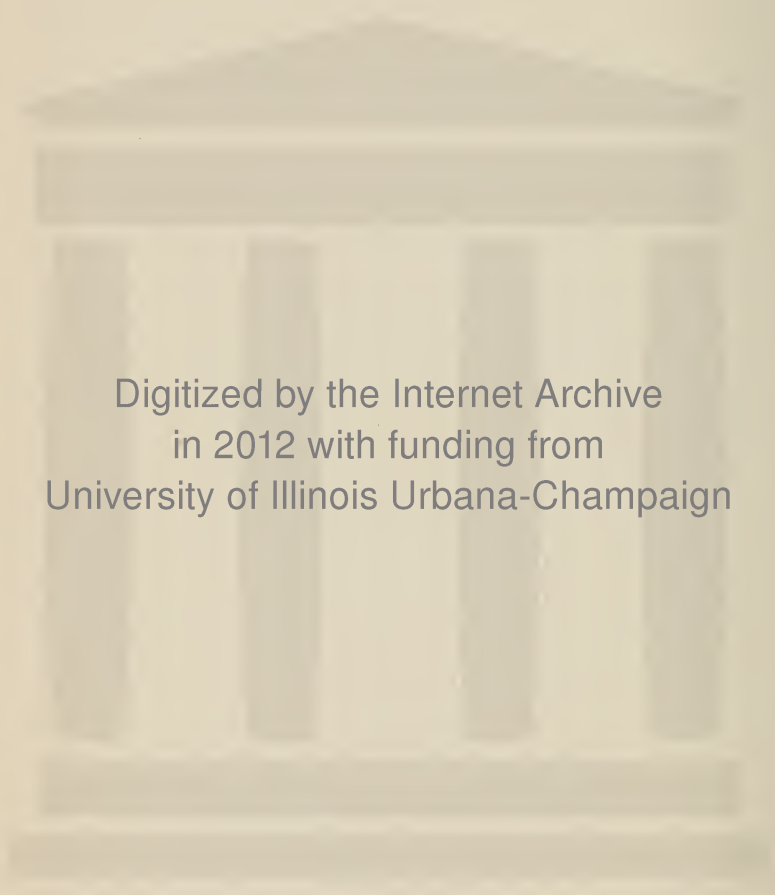


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LIFE AT BOWDOIN





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LIFE AT BOWDOIN

A Pen Picture of the College Life
of Bowdoin Undergraduates

*Written by Bowdoin Men, Edited by
the Student Council, Published and
Distributed by Bowdoin College*



BOWDOIN COLLEGE BULLETIN

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JUNE, 1921

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**FOREWORD**

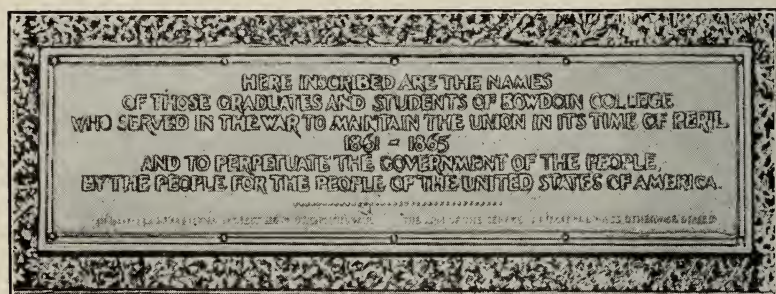
A generation ago President William DeWitt Hyde, than whom there has been no greater teacher or friend of Bowdoin men, voiced the offer of the college to prospective students in the following words:

"To be at home in all lands and all ages: to count Nature a familiar acquaintance, and Art an intimate friend: to gain a standard for the appreciation of other men's work and the criticism of your own: to carry the keys of the world's library in your pocket, and feel its resources behind you in whatever task you undertake: to make hosts of friends among the men of your own age who are to be the leaders in all walks of life: to lose yourself in generous enthusiasms and co-operate with others for common ends: to learn manners from students who are gentlemen, and form character under professors who are Christians:—this is the offer of the college for four of the best years of your life."

Proudly as ever Bowdoin undergraduates transmit this message to their younger brothers in the schools, in order that the inspiration which it carries may remain a part of President Hyde's undying work. But the school boy asks for something besides inspiration. He is eager to know how the college men, his future college mates, live and work and play. To meet this demand the members of the Bowdoin Student Council present this little collection of the letters of Bowdoin men. The letters have not been selected or edited with any thought of studied presentation, much less of literary style. For it has seemed to us that the boys for whom they are intended will gain a truer idea of things as they are,—will catch more of the atmosphere of the campus,—from these rough and ready epistles than from any attempts which we might make to show the priceless gifts of style obtainable in English. If we must shroud the identity of the writers in mystery to spare the feelings of our teachers in the gentle art of writing English prose, we greet our younger brothers unashamed. They too shall learn to use the pen of Bacon,—if they will. They too, mayhap, will chuck old Bacon in the discard when they write to friends back home.



Trustees and Guests at Commencement



Tablet, Memorial Hall



Flag on Chapel Tower

I.

BRUNSWICK, MAINE, March 11, 1921.

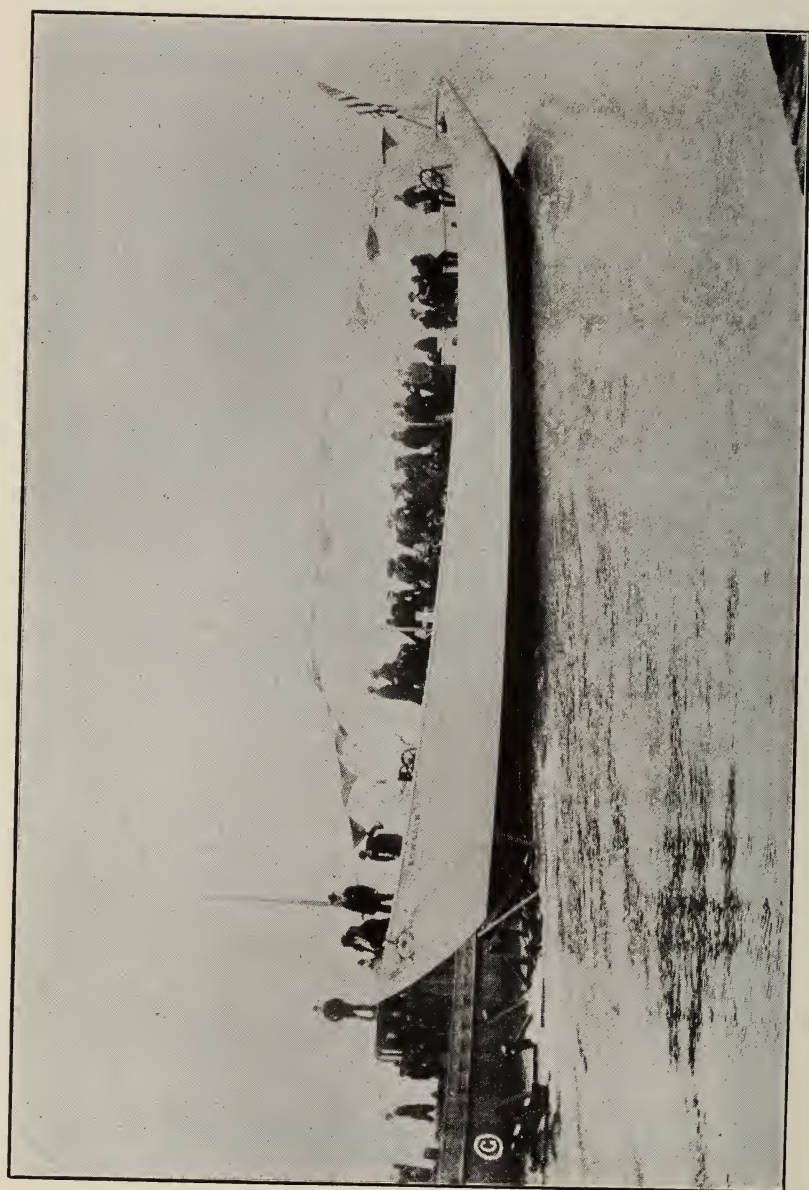
DEAR JIM,

I will be glad to see about your room for you. There is no hurry for it's not time for allotments yet and the rooms are about the same anyhow, unless you believe in ghosts. If you do, you might want to sleep in Longfellow's room on the chance of his coming round some night. He does sort of haunt the place in a way. There always seems to be someone around who can turn out good verse. Did you see the volume of Forbes Rickard's poems, published after he was killed in France, or the sonnet that Hal White wrote on his death? If you didn't, I'll send them to you sometime. Rickard really represented Bowdoin traditions in two ways, with Longfellow and Hawthorne on one side and Chamberlain and Howard and all the other great Bowdoin soldiers of the Civil War on the other. They were a great crowd, those Bowdoin Civil War men. There must have been about a dozen generals among them. And I guess we would have had a few more generals if Kaiser Bill had stayed in his business a little longer, with Sherman Shumway going from doughboy to lieutenant-colonel in a year.

I wonder sometimes why they don't keep more track of the rooms that famous men have used in the ends. Peary must have slept somewhere when he climbed the chapel tower to hang a flag there and to get in practice for hanging a flag on the North Pole. I wonder whether Don MacMillan (he's on the Faculty here, but no one calls him professor yet), slept in Peary's room. I suppose you have read that he is to start for the Arctic as soon as the *Bowdoin* is ready. You see I have a personal reason for wanting to know about rooms for I have a hunch that I am going to be a little shining light at Harvard Law before I start for New York and Washington. So I want to hunt up the rooms of Tom Reed and Franklin Pierce and Chief Justice Fuller and get in one night apiece anyhow. If you still want to be a great financier, as you did last summer, you might start in Harvey Gibson's room. I'll see whether the college treasurer has a special price on it. On the other hand, you may want to take any old room just to have the fun of seeing what it is that will land you in Who's Who. You can't miss picking something good, so you had better think of getting a good room-mate and leave the room to Fate and Furbish.

Yours sincerely,

L. M. G.



II.

15 SOUTH APPLETON, BOWDOIN COLLEGE, Feb. 12, 1921.

DEAR NELSON,

So you want to know about activities at Bowdoin. What do you mean activities? I suppose the chief one here is trying to make the Faculty think that you're doing about twice as much work as your family expects you to do and four times as much as you ever intend to do. But of course, you know all about that already. Why didn't you tell me your specialty? Or are you going to be the original little college wonder and get two pages of honors in the *Bugle*? Anyhow here goes.

Besides getting your three letters in football, track, and baseball, you can pick up a couple of fancy ones all fixed up with foils and hockey sticks. Hockey is getting to be quite an intercollegiate sport here and we have a decent rink at last. The fencing team matches up with Harvard, Dartmouth, M. I. T., and other minor New England colleges, but we hope to get real competition some day. You might want a tennis letter too, but if so you'll have to step lively, for we expect to have them all guessing at Longwood for a year or two. If this won't give you enough athletics, you can fill in your time with boxing and wrestling, and play handball or basketball between bouts just to get back your wind.

I seem to remember that you're a sort of boy Demosthenes, though I should think that the pebbles down your way might make your statements seem a little fishy. Still, the judges of the debates around here don't always notice fishy statements, as the undefeated team of Ripon College lately found to its cost, so you may get by after all. Seriously, we make a good deal of debating here for the use that it may be to a man in after life.

When it comes to writing, you will have all sorts of choice. If a fellow wants to learn to be a cub reporter or the editor of one of "our leading metropolitan dailies" all he has to do is to get on the *Orient* board. If he wants to be a Shakespeare or an Amy Lowell or a Ring Lardner, he practices in the *Quill*. But the real geniuses, the Mark Twains, the Bill Nyes and the Briggses, find their outlet in the *Bearskin*. You could tell that by the name.

Perhaps you like the footlights. If so there's chance enough there, too. You can play anything from an English duke to a Broadway chicken in the Masque and Gown shows and do quite a little traveling in the New England states. The glee and mandolin clubs do even better than that on trips, for they get down to New York. They always end their shows too with dances. I suppose that's why



Outing Club on River



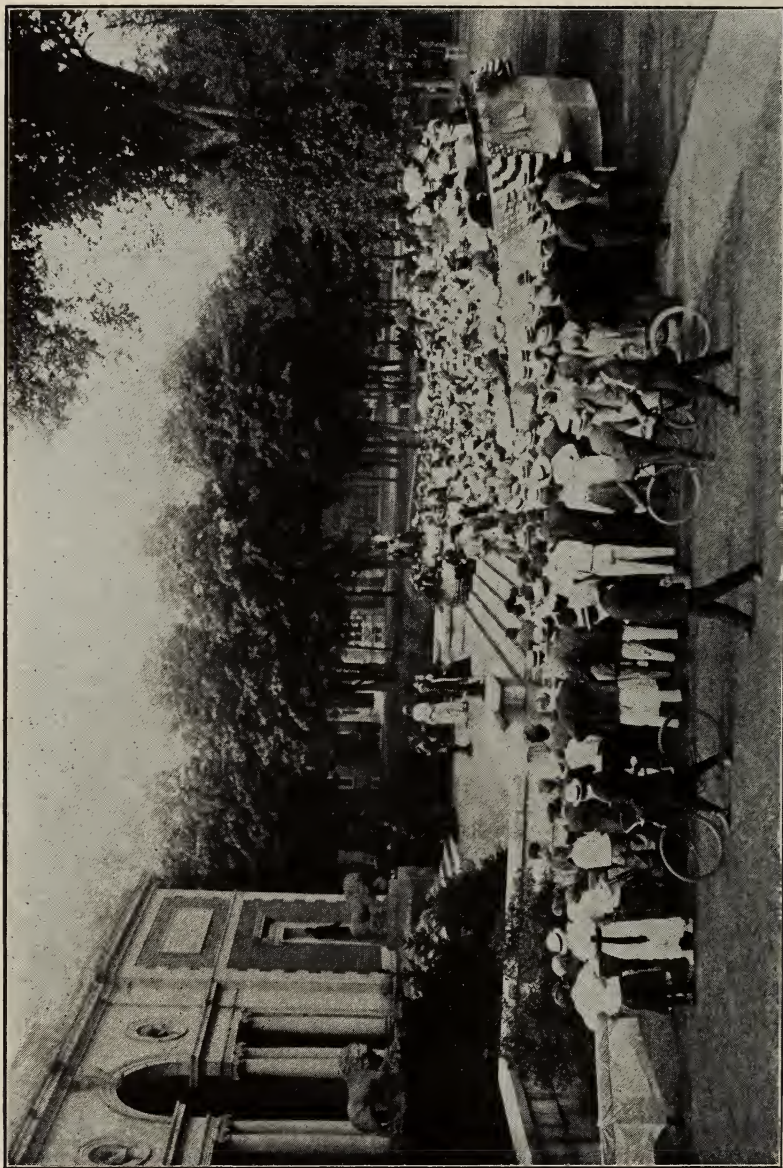
Biology Club Cabin

they have such classy girls up for house parties. Even a fellow who isn't either an actor or a musician can get a chance to play with the grease paints in the vaudeville stunts put on at some of the rallies.

I was almost forgetting the outdoor activities. A man can learn to serve his country by joining the rifle club, or prepare for a happy old age by playing golf free of charge on the links of the Brunswick Golf Club. A young, but promising, Outing Club is organizing an all the year round programme of camping, fishing (they've got the fish stories already) tramping, and canoeing, besides all the winter sports. There aren't many colleges that have anything like our opportunities to get on the water or into the woods, and we are just waking up to the fact. Speaking of the Outing Club reminds me of the Biology Club, which is quite an outing club in itself. Like all the other departmental clubs (clubs formed for the outside study of special subjects such as history, government, classics, English literature, and so forth), the Biology Club holds meetings where you get a mixture of instruction and sociability. But the special feature in the case of this club consists of the practice of taking field trips which give a living interest to the subject and promote good fellowship among the men who are especially interested in it. The club has just built a cabin in the woods with bunks and other accommodations for twelve men, and talks of building others. Of course all the departmental clubs are more or less useful and pleasant and I advise you to join at least one if you can.

I wonder how many activities I have forgotten. Quite a few I guess, like the college band and the chapel choir and attending public lectures for credit when the Faculty is afraid there won't be enough of an audience to please the lecturer. But perhaps you'll think you can fill up your time and develop a few of your talents from the ones I have told you about. That is the big thing about a small college, the all-round development. In a big place a fellow has to be a star to show up in anything, but the small college needs the best that each of her men can do in every line and helps him bring it out.

And at Bowdoin, the man is usually ready to do all he can because of one activity that I haven't mentioned yet. It is hard to describe because it has no special organization, no badge, no rules, no governing body. In fact it is almost invisible. And yet it is bigger than all organizations, for it includes every man here, and is the most firmly established and influential thing about the whole place. This vital and actively working activity is the spirit that permeates and envelops the whole college, that grips and holds and leads every group in the work that it has to do. It is democratic, enthusiastic, courageous, contagious, and true. It is a great spirit of comradeship in working for an institution which we love and which we are in-

*Commencement Play*

tensely proud to call our own—our Bowdoin College. Get that when you come and you'll find that it isn't hard to make good in activities.

Please remember me to your brother and remember to write.

Yours,

A. H.



Masque and Gown



Class Day Exercises



Stu

III.

5 HYDE HALL, BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

DEAR BOB,

Thanks for your letter congratulating me on my Phi Beta Kappa election. I'll own that I was mighty pleased to get it. It will tickle Dad. The attitude of the fellows at the house is funny. They all jolly me, but you can see that they are pleased to see another key come into the house at that. I don't suppose any house here would admit that it was after high marks, but they are all more or less anxious to get them because they know that it helps in getting good freshmen and because there is an underlying feeling that it is a disgrace to be low down. When you come here, don't let anyone persuade you that you won't be more respected if you keep up good standing in your courses. For one thing, the Faculty will keep you out of all activities if your standing drops too low and most fellows realize that a man who is needed on an athletic team is hurting the college just as much by getting himself ineligible as he is by breaking training or not coming out for practice. But there is more than that to it, though I don't know whether I can express what it is. A fellow who loafes doesn't usually get much in offices and I suppose that it is because they feel that he can't be much good if he hasn't enough pep to do the work that he came here to do. We know that the standards are high, that they always have been high, and that Bowdoin is the one college in the state which gets first-class rating from the U. S. Bureau of Education on the basis of work done by its graduates in professional and graduate schools. So it seems a sort of challenge to keep up with the college and to keep up with the old graduates who met these standards and who will not have them cut down. It is worth some extra work to know that you will be proud to name your college in any company, and it may be useful in landing a job, too.



Body

You want to know how I got my key. Just by sticking at it, I suppose, and using a little system, so that athletics and other activities didn't get more than their share of time. You will be surprised to see how many athletes are high men in their courses. It is just a question of not wasting time. One thing I didn't do and that was to pick my courses with the idea of getting high ranks. Some men do it, but I think it is poor policy to concentrate on just those things that you like best or find easiest. Of course, if a man knows what he is going in for after graduation, it may be all right to specialize. If you are going into manufacturing, you may find it wise to take a good deal of physics and chemistry or mechanical drawing, and you can get good training in all of them here. If you are out for business, you will want some of these, with courses in modern languages and in money and banking or commercial law. If you want to be a lawyer or a preacher or an editor or anyone who has to write or talk, you will take a lot of history and government and philosophy and English. Then, of course, there are a lot of things that you will have to take. You can find out about these in the catalogue. But there is still room for spreading and I believe in it. The college tradition is that a gentleman ought to have an all round education, and you can surely get it here. Languages range all the way from French to Russian, history from the Roman Empire to the Bolsheviks, and philosophy and psychology as far as you can follow. There are courses in art, with an art collection unsurpassed by that of any college in the country to study in, courses in music with **At** equipment, and courses in things as practical as wireless telegraphy.

But after all it isn't so much the subject as the way it is taught and that is where Bowdoin, I think, scores. You can get mere facts in any high school or second rate college, or in a public library for that matter. But you won't get what you need far more, practice in picking out the facts that matter, joining them up, working out conclusions and arguing on the conclusions that you get. And

practice of that sort is one of the Bowdoin specialties. The classes are broken up into little groups called conferences which meet with the instructor once a week to argue over the lectures and what we have read. One of our younger graduates who is in a big business house in New York told me that that was the best thing he had had here. His chief of department had meetings of the juniors where he quizzed them to see whether they were getting the real stuff. Most of them went all up in the air, but he felt that he was back home at Bowdoin, and I guess he put it over them, though he didn't say so.

Well, Bob, it's getting late. Chapel at 8.20 and then a lecture and two conferences unless one of the professors gives an "adjourn" by not turning up for five minutes after the chapel bell rings. They don't even do that very often nowadays. That's what comes of raising professors' salaries. Now here's a little dope for you. Get your entrance requirements fixed up in good time so you can start even with the game, keep your eye on the ball when you get here and you'll make good.

Thank your mother for her message.

Yours,
P. D. C.



House Party Group

IV.

BRUNSWICK, MAINE, March 28, 1921.

DEAR BILL,

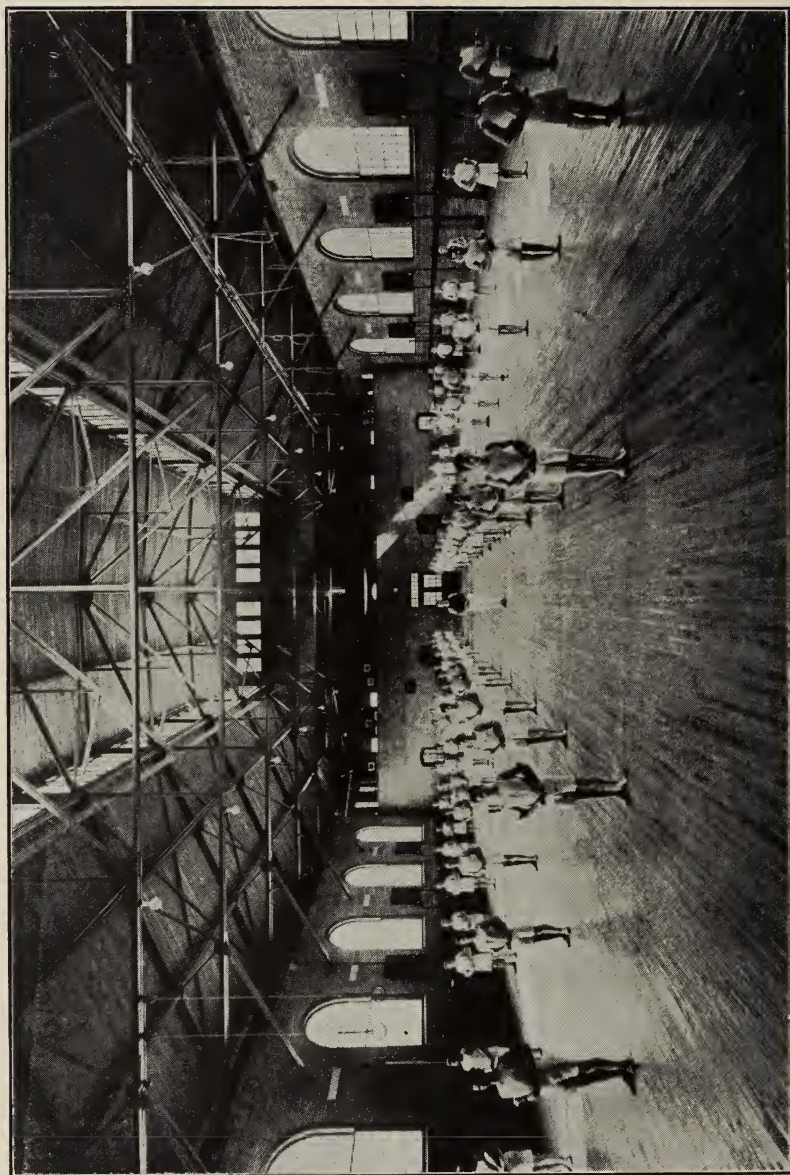
The record for the hundred yard dash, you asked about, is 9 4-5. It was made by a Bowdoin man, Cloudman '01, back in 1900. He was a huge fellow, six feet tall and weighed over 200. He played football, too. The story goes that he could do a hundred yards in 10 seconds flat across a ploughed field with rubber boots on.

We still specialize in track here. Have a wonderful coach, Jack Magee. You've probably heard of him. He went over to Antwerp with the Olympic Team last summer as a trainer; took a Bowdoin man along with him as one of America's milers. You may think, Bill, that we have a sort of a knack for getting star trackmen to come to Bowdoin. If it is so, we don't need to. We can make them here. Magee will take a fellow who never had on a track shoe before he came to college and inside of a couple of years he will be a champion. Jack is strong on the form. "Stride and bound!" he says. It works, too. Athletic experts say they can recognize Bowdoin runners at these big intercollegiate meets on account of their good running form. You see we do a "scholarly piece of work" on the athletic field as well as in the class room.

Speaking of studies, Bill, I might say that they have to come first at Bowdoin. Although we put lots of pep into our sports, nobody can play on a varsity team unless he is up in all his studies. Last fall a fellow got four "A's" and a "B." He made his "B" for winning the cross country race.

Roomy just blew in and is rushing about packing his grip for a baseball trip. The team is off to New York and beyond. They're going to play Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton. We have a good team this year, so we are tackling the big ones. They've been practicing about a month now. Starting baseball in February sounds rather early for a Maine spring, doesn't it? But we have winter practice indoors. The Hyde Athletic building, part of the college gym, is our cage. It has a clear floor space large enough for a full-sized infield with twenty feet beyond the bases. The floor is clay and when rolled hard makes the fastest sort of a diamond. So we start baseball here at the same time the big league teams go South for their spring practice and no wonder we have enough time for a schedule of 24 games.

While I'm in the athletic mood, I might tell you about our other major sport, football. Sure, we've beaten Harvard. The last time we won, our quarterback, instead of falling on a fumbled ball thought he could do something better, so he picked it up and ran 80 yards



Freshman Required Gym.

for a touchdown. He is a Y. M. C. A. secretary now. I mentioned that, so you could see that everybody goes out for athletics. If you're not on the gridiron fighting with the team, you are in the grandstand yelling for them to fight. And believe me, Bill, Bowdoin teams play the game fair, but they play it hard, too.

Last fall, the game with the University of Maine was to decide the State championship. It was some old battle, Bill. Maine was much heavier than we were and was picked to win, so our fight was an uphill one. There was no score in the first three quarters, but early in the fourth a Maine halfback got a lucky run around end for a touchdown. That was a challenge to the traditional Bowdoin fight and the team met it as a Bowdoin team should. With six minutes to play our team took the ball by straight line bucking for nearly seventy yards and tied the score just before the final whistle.

These are our major sports, Bill, but you'll find hockey, basketball, tennis, golf, fencing, rifle teams here. Every man to his liking is our motto and if you are not a star in one of these sports already and if we can't make you one, still you can take Freshman Required Athletics and get an "A" if you don't get a "B."

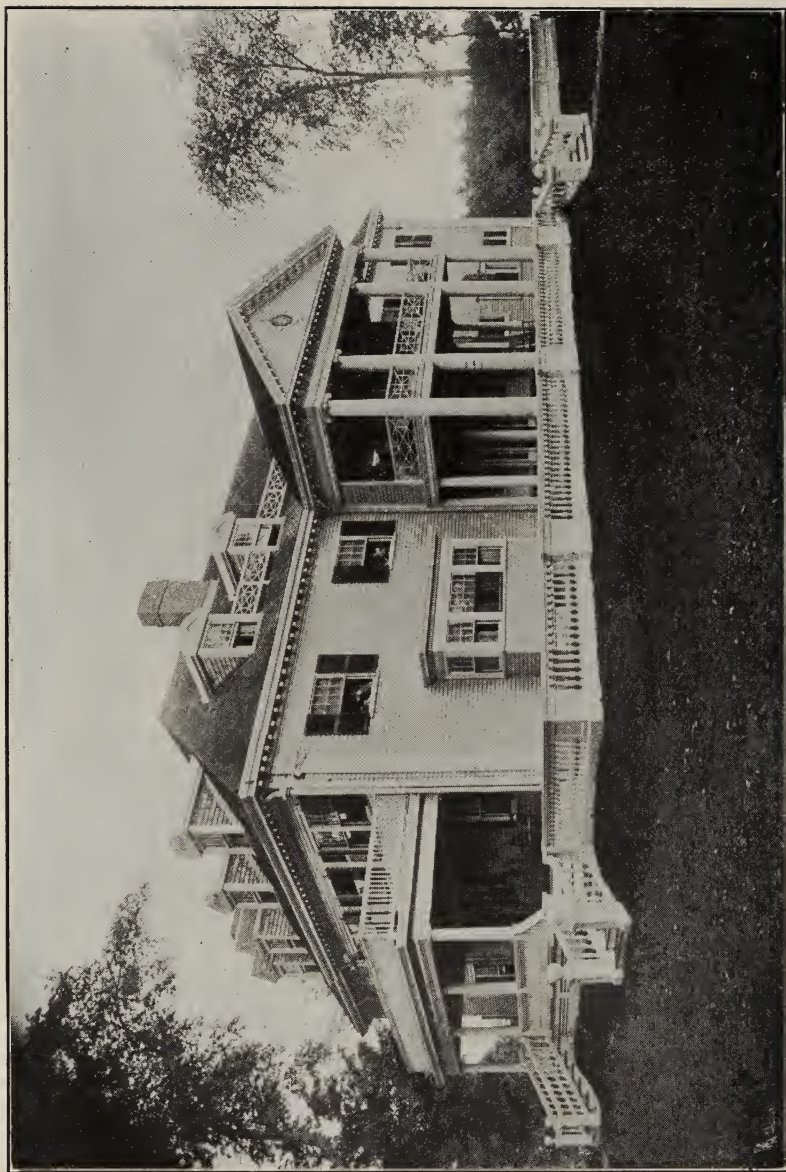
Better come and try. Best of luck to you!

Sincerely,

M. H. A.



Hurdle Race



Fraternity House Exterior

V.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE, April 14, 1921.

DEAR BROWN,

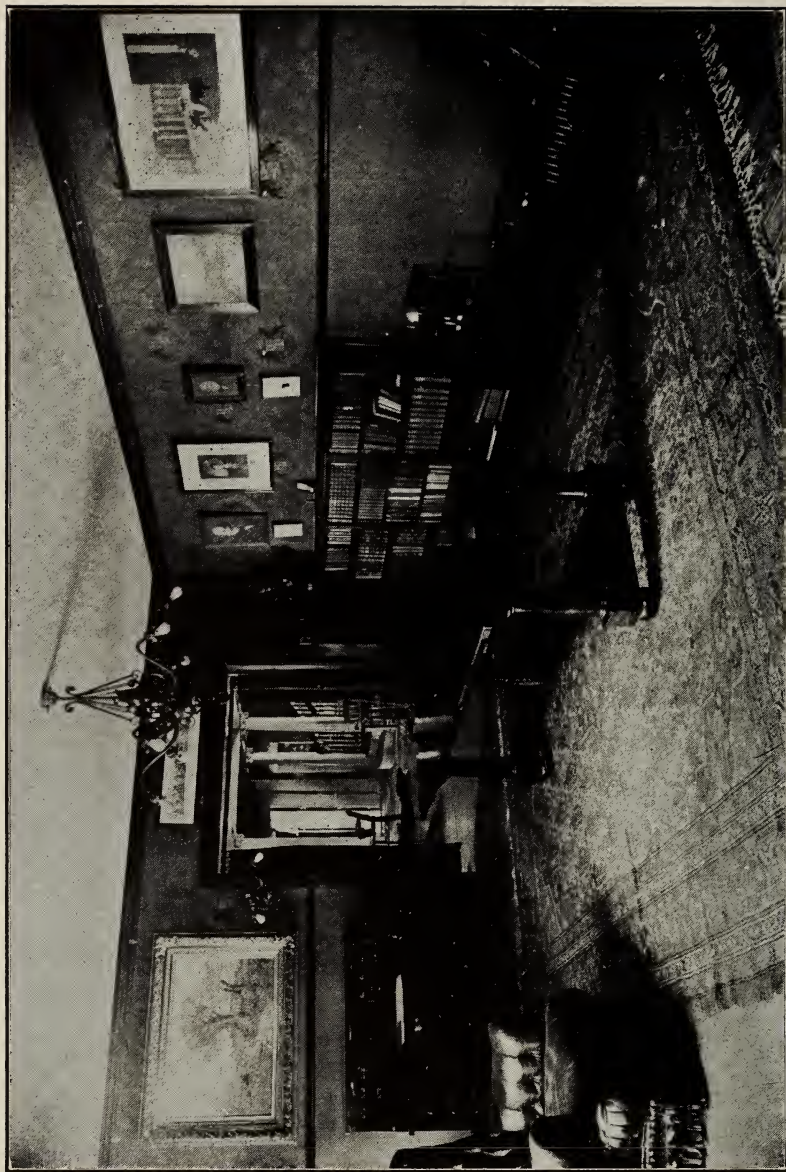
I was mighty glad to get your letter this morning and hear that you are coming to Bowdoin next year. You'll never in all your life make a better move. It's too bad that you couldn't come down over the week-end of February 18 and 19. The College entertained pretty nearly two hundred high school students and you can be sure that we gave them the best time we could. The various fraternities each staged a vaudeville act on Friday evening, over in Memorial Hall. Fun, say it was the best evening's entertainment I've had since coming here, and we have lots of good rallies and get-togethers, too.

On March 5th came the Indoor Track Meet with various New England schools competing. Huntington took first place by one point over Exeter. At the rally that evening came some more vaudeville stunts, varied by speeches and "eats." 'Twas *some* party.

You ask me to tell you about Bowdoin fraternities and social life. It's a long story, but here goes. In the first place there are ten national fraternities, the oldest established here eighty years ago and seven of them running here more than fifty years. There is also one local. On the average, there are about thirty-five men in each fraternity so that approximately ninety per cent. of the men in college have joined fraternities. The various houses maintain dining-rooms and about half of the men, usually upper-classmen, room in the houses. Fraternities not only provide living accommodations, but also give a man the chance to form closer friendships with a lot of other fellows than he could otherwise do. It means a lot to a freshman, too, to get supervision and advice from upper classmen who are interested in developing and making the best of him for the fraternity's sake, as well as for his own. During his four years a man will have sixty to eighty fraternity brothers. Needless to say, one of the chief things you will get out of college is an understanding of men.

The fraternities form the center of the everyday social life of the college. You can picture for yourself the various games and entertainments which a group of thirty or forty men would hit upon when out for fun. I might say that there's nothing more pleasant than gathering around a good hearth-fire for singing and stories after supper. With a pianist and a few banjo and mandolin strummers, nothing is lacking to a good time.

As for social life outside the fraternity, it would take a book to describe it all. First, there are the four formal college dances,—the Christmas Dance, the Sophomore Hop in the early spring, and the Ivy (Junior) and Commencement (Senior) Dances in June.



Fraternity House Interior

Besides these, there are occasional informal college dances. All the big dances are held in the Gymnasium. If you've ever been in the Gym and can imagine it properly decorated, vibrating with the music of some clever dance orchestra, and filled with the prettiest girls in New England, then you have a faint idea of what a college dance is. Of course, at the time of these dances the various fraternities have house-parties, so that the last three days of the week are filled with dancing, sleigh-rides, motor-boating and even less formal kinds of entertainment.

Turning to the everyday forms of social activity, there's always something to do when time hangs heavy on your hands. You may go to the movies. The town boasts two theatres, so you can see a different show every night,—if you have dropped all your courses or wish to flunk them. It's a common form of relaxation and quite harmless, unless one of the professors for whom you are supposed to be studying industriously comes in and sits down beside you. The more romantic and light-footed among us sometimes take in the week-end dances held in the Town Hall or in neighboring towns.

Another form of entertainment, to ascend from the ridiculous to the sublime, is that of calling on the professors. Indeed, one member of the Faculty, the Dean, insists on having the students call on him, even during office hours. But the usual method consists in shining the shoes, putting on a sombre tie, pulling a doorbell and walking on tiptoes into the host's studious-looking study. Seriously, one of the many pleasant features of Bowdoin College life is the close acquaintance which exists between the faculty members and the students. It is a rare opportunity to be able to spend an evening with a man like President Sills. And if, by any chance, the professor is not a world authority on his subject, we can get the broad viewpoint from the well-known lecturers who come here. Last year, Taft explained the reservations of the League of Nations to us, and Hugh Walpole told us about the spirit of New Russia. One often gets a chance to meet these men at receptions, held after the lecture in the fraternity houses.

Then, there are concerts, plays given by the town and college dramatic clubs, and rallies in Memorial Hall before the big games and track meets. After your first year you will be able to amuse yourself by sending the freshmen through their antics, of which there is an ever-increasing variety. Some of the more common stunts are singing and reciting pieces at meal times, would be gymnastic feats, etc., *ad finitum et absurdum*. You'll find out all about it very soon now.

Well, I see that I am on the way to writing a book, so will stop. It's really impossible to describe the things which go to make up college life. Why don't you come down this spring and look

around? That is the best way to gain an appreciation of the place where you are going to work and play for four years. Just drop me a line and I'll meet you at the train.

Sincerely yours,
E. H. E.



Pyramid of Fraternity Brothers



Freshman and Goat

VI.

12 WINTHROP HALL, March 16, 1921.

DEAR JACK,

I'm glad you asked about Bowdoin traditions, because I find the traditions of an old college like this one of the most interesting and amusing parts of the life. There are so many of them that I can't possibly tell you about them all, but I can pick out a few so that you can tell what you are likely to run into at the start anyhow. Of course, you want to know about freshmen traditions first, and of course the first of these are connected with fraternity rushing. I think you'll be surprised at the welcome you'll get when you strike here. Everyone who ever heard of you and a good many more will be coming round to invite you to their houses, and you'll get your first taste of what fraternity life here means, the intimacy, the jokes, the songs, the blazing log fires, and the forming of friendships that will last. I envy the freshman who is getting his first taste. Well, some night you will find the crowd you want and that wants you, and then the pre-initiation stunts will start. They aren't so bad. We don't have the scaring kind here unless it would scare you to be sent downtown, for example, with a bootblack's kit and made to ask every pretty girl you meet whether you may shine her shoes. You may want to kick a little at the time but you'll yarn about it for the rest of your life. Then soon will come initiation night, one of the nights you'll like to remember best. You'll meet the alumni of your fraternity, some of them young and all fired up with all the things they are going to do in the world, some grey haired and quiet and successful, but all back for the love of their college and fraternity and all interested in you. And when the banquet is over, you'll go marching around with your new brothers through the campus and town, singing your fraternity songs and cheering the other crowds to show that fraternity rivalries can't hurt the spirit that binds Bowdoin man to Bowdoin man. But meanwhile you'll be learning that you are a freshman and at mortal enmity with your teachers in college traditions, the sophs. You'll buy your freshman cap, and learn what Phi Chi stands for, and hear all sorts of tales about the Gobblers who gobble fresh on sight, if they don't follow to the letter the commands of the Sophomore proclamations. You'll help to make plans for the great flag rush, and perhaps you'll be able to make the freshman baseball or football team for the freshman-sophomore series.

But even if you are a freshman, you are a Bowdoin man and will soon learn the Bowdoin hello. It is important. I mean of course the tradition of saying hello to every Bowdoin man you meet, because that lasts all through a man's college course, and because it stands for something we're very proud of here, the democracy that is so

big a part of life at Bowdoin. Perhaps you've heard this called a rich man's college by people who never saw it, or who couldn't get in, or who don't know what else to say against it. That's about as true as calling the State of Maine a rich man's state. We've got fellows here who have been to expensive schools and who don't have to worry as much as most of us about making their living when they get out, but it's a Bowdoin tradition that it will take you some time to find out which ones they are.

But here I am far on in my letter and not through even with freshman traditions yet. I haven't told you of the water fights or furniture-stacking in the dormitories. I haven't even said anything about Triangle, the math professor's great trotter, which nearly always comes in first at the Topsham fair, and is supported by a crowd of freshmen rooters to whom Triangle's owner always donates admission tickets. I haven't asked you to prepare to shed a tear on the tombstone of Anna where freshmen yearly bury their analytical geometry texts (after final marks are out) with transports of grief. You'll find the year full enough of traditions up to the night when you will burn your freshman cap in the bonfire outside the gym, to show the Ivy girls who come out to watch you between dances that no sophomore can ever call you fresh again.

And so there is no time to tell of the tradition of the later years, of the clanging of the chapel bell and the torchlight processions four abreast after athletic victories, with speeches by Prexy and the coach and captain if it's a home game; of college sings in spring evenings on the campus, and a dozen other things that are going to make me miss this little old college before long. The last traditions will soon be over for me now. Soon I'll be getting ready my rig-out for seniors' last gym, when we'll celebrate our last gym class after the most ancient order; which includes hanging the effigies of a gym instructor or two on a neighboring tree. Beyond that is seniors' last chapel when we'll leave the old chapel for the last time, marching out slowly, locked four abreast and singing Auld Lang Syne. Then at the fraternity houses comes seniors' last supper. We'll sit around the fire and each of us tell his chapter what college and fraternity have meant to him and how sorry he is to leave it all. We end the evening by the round of song and cheer the same as on initiation night. But it always ends with the long Bowdoin yell in front of the Chapel, for it is the College that holds the foremost place in our affections.

Yours sincerely,
H. M. L.





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